

# Bipartisan Delegation Fights to Prevent Future Military Base Closures in California

Members of the Delegation Strongly Urge Secretary Rumsfeld to Use Fair Criteria

Media Contact: Christine Glunz, 202.225.3072

Washington, DC – Fifty-two members of the bipartisan California Congressional Delegation sent a letter to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld today, urging him to ensure fairness, thoroughness and accuracy in the upcoming round of base closures and realignments for 2005. The suggested criteria includes:

- 1) Recognition of the value of intellectual capital and the synergy between the skilled civilian workers in California's communities and the critically important roles and missions they support at our military bases;
- 2) Consideration of the costs associated with reestablishing or realigning a military activity as it relates to the redevelopment of essential resources to the military mission, e.g. commercial suppliers, business and professional expertise, and technology clusters;
- 3) Broadening the concept of joint operations to include base functions and installations currently or potentially critical to the Department of Homeland Security; and
- 4) Recognition of the disproportionate contribution our State has already made to the streamlining of the military's base infrastructure.

Leaders in this effort among the delegation include Reps. Sam Farr, (D-Carmel), Ken Calvert (R-Corona) and Jane Harman (D-Venice).

"This letter is an important bipartisan effort to ensure that the imminent BRAC criteria are such that no one state will be overly burdened by base closures," Rep. Farr said. "A critical thrust in our argument is that the criteria ought to consider the value of economic intangibles such as educational and community connections that make the military mission successful in one specific location and nowhere else. This kind of crucial community-base synergy has never been part of the BRAC formula before."

"The Department of Homeland Security should be included in examining functions and installations that may also jointly serve the needs of the Department of Homeland Security," said Congressman Calvert. "Just as the Department of Defense is increasing its focus on joint operations across the Services and bases, I believe it is wise to place a similar focus on the nation's need to maintain assets that are or can be mutually beneficial to both our defense and homeland security."

"As a leader in many high-tech industries, California has naturally created synergistic and beneficial relationships between bases and local economies, like the one that exists in my district at the LA AFB," said Congresswoman Jane Harman. "I am pleased to see an overwhelming, bipartisan majority of my California colleagues signed this letter and encouraged the Pentagon to preserve these affiliations."

"By encouraging the Defense Department to consider the critical importance of bases during the upcoming BRAC round, the delegation is united in recognizing the importance of the defense community in our state," said Rep. David Dreier (R-Glendora), who chairs the Republican delegation.

"As we have seen in previous years, California runs the risk of losing a disproportionate amount of military bases across our state," said Rep. Lofgren (D-San Jose), chair of California's Democratic Congressional Delegation. "Our delegation has come together in a strong bipartisan effort with the leadership of Representatives Farr, Calvert and Harman to prevent these closures and continue to fight so our bases stay open."

The text of the letter is below:

"As members of the California Congressional Delegation, we strongly urge the inclusion of the following criteria to ensure fairness, thoroughness and accuracy in the upcoming round of base closures and realignments:

- 1) Recognition of the value of intellectual capital and the synergy between the skilled civilian workers in California's communities and the critically important roles and missions they support at our military bases;
- 2) Consideration of the costs associated with reestablishing or realigning a military activity as it relates to the redevelopment of essential resources to the military mission, e.g. commercial suppliers, business and professional expertise, and technology clusters;
- 3) Broadening the concept of joint operations to include base functions and installations currently or potentially critical to the Department of Homeland Security; and
- 4) Recognition of the disproportionate contribution our State has already made to the streamlining of the military's base infrastructure.

"We feel it is warranted to focus particular attention on a base's integration with nearby business, academic and research resources. Our State's strong defense industry has fostered the growth of a highly skilled and highly paid labor force that cannot be readily replaced or easily moved. Nearly 75 percent of the jobs lost through previous rounds of military downsizing are precisely those jobs most critical to a modern defense establishment.

"As you know, many studies have warned that high skill workers often decline to follow a job to a new base location - increasing costs as well as disrupting the pace of defense modernization. As such, we believe that any calculations of the total costs of a base closure and realignment must include costs associated with losing this synergistic relationship and having to recreate it elsewhere.

"Just as the Department is increasing its focus on joint operations across the Services and bases, we recommend that consideration should also be given for a base's current or potential role in protecting the homeland.

"Lastly, we believe the upcoming BRAC round should not force California to shoulder more than its fair share of cuts. California was particularly hard hit by the prior closures, shouldering a disproportionate 60 percent of net personnel cuts, despite the fact that it housed at that time only 15 percent of the nation's military personnel. California now houses only 10 percent of the nation's military employees and we recommend the inclusion of criteria that ensures our State is not asked again to contribute disproportionately to the streamlining of the military's base infrastructure.

"We respectfully suggest these additional criteria because we believe they contribute to a fair and thorough estimate of costs and savings from base closures and realignments.